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# LAND RESOURCES

# DEFORESTATION

## Position paper submitted by the Netherlands*

## Forestry in Agenda 21

1. This position paper contains the views of the European Community and its member States with respect to forest issues in relation to Agenda 21 and should be seen as a contribution to the ongoing debate on this issue.

2. Agenda 21 should set out the areas, targets and process for promoting and helping to achieve the principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, taking due account of the need to strengthen, improve and, where appropriate, reorientate existing targets and programmes (e.g. CGIAR, TFAP, ITTO 2000 target). Agenda 21 should be a process-oriented dynamic action programme reflecting the overall principles for the forestry sector and thus setting practical ways and means for multilateral cooperation.

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* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Community.

3. The overall objective of the Agenda 21 programme should be to assist in counteracting processes of environmental degradation, in particular land degradation, promoting sustainable management of natural resources and meeting the requirements of rural populations. More specific objectives should be to maintain and/or increase the production potential of the land, including recovery of degraded areas and identification of new areas for agricultural production; address pressures arising on forests from outside the forest sector, including agriculture; clarify land ownership with the aim of ensuring that local people have secure access to land and be made responsible for managing the land they depend on; meet economic and social requirements of local population; avoid losses of gene resources; help restore and maintain the ecological and climatic balance; promote local responsibility at various levels for the management of natural ecosystems; and promote intersectoral coordination.

4. Such goals require certain preconditions. It is generally recognized that conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources can only be achieved if they are preceded by a comprehensive land-use planning exercise, including, where appropriate, environmental impact studies, taking into account, inter alia, the dynamics of population increase; if they can count on the participation of the population and are accompanied by rural development actions in and around the area to be managed on a sustainable basis. It is also generally recognized that in many cases sustainable development in other sectors cannot be achieved if the dependency of the rural population on forests and the use of trees is ignored, and if forestry and agro-forestry activities are not integrated in the activities.

5. Taking into account the above, Agenda 21 should include the following forestry programmes:

(a) Supporting and promoting national afforestation and reforestation programmes including funding provisions;

(b) Developing more training and research and disseminating facilities for research results;

(c) Strengthening national planning, implementation, training and research capacities, in particular of developing countries' institutions entrusted with the management of productive forest areas and integrally protected ecosystems;

(d) Strengthening the planning and implementation capacity of local populations and national NGOs, particularly in developing countries, with a view to promoting their role in the protection and sustainable management of natural resources;

(e) Supporting the elaboration and implementation/application of master plans for land-use and systems of monitoring land-use activities including changes in forest cover;

(f) Supporting efforts to establish permanent productive and integrally protected areas, and to elaborate sustainable management plans for these areas and their support zones;

(g) Promoting and supporting efforts to integrate forestry and agro-forestry activities into development programmes and activities of other sectors;

(h) Increasing the generation of income through the encouragement of industry and trade in forest products based on sustainably managed forest resources.

Note: Agenda 21 is part of UNCED's overall work on forests. The Community supports the work going on in the Prepcom to develop a global consensus in the form of a declaration on forests to be adopted by UNCED. The Community believes that such a declaration should form the basis of the international legally binding Convention which is our ultimate aim.

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